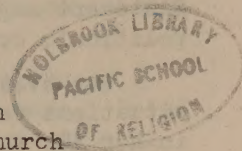


Japan Christian Activity News

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SALVATION YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

"Let's discuss visitation evangelism," proposed a layman, as his discussion group met for the first time at the Conference on Salvation Today, at Amagi-Sanso Sept. 21-24. But the discussion took another turn and never returned to visitation evangelism.

At the end of four days of lectures on Japanese culture, long hours in small groups and Bible study on texts chosen by Yoshinobu Kumazawa, Tokyo Union Theological Seminary professor and chairman of the NCC Faith and Order Committee, the Conference produced an 18-item Statement on Salvation Today. The Statement was felt, however, to be a pale reflection of the frequently lively dialogue that occurred at the meeting.

Up to now, what has "Salvation" meant? the 90 participants were asked first. In general, the pastors and laymen and women who came from the NCC's ten member churches and eight participating organizations agreed that salvation of the individual soul has been the primary concern.

What is the situation today?

The description of the "today" that constitutes the contemporary setting for Salvation was drawn largely by solidly built, executive-sized Minoru Ishimaru, a minister, the director of the Keiyo Culture and Education Center. The vast scale of the 10-year old Keiyo industrial complex, the dehumanizing effects on its population, and the impermanency of even such highly developed structures is the future of all Japan, said Ishimaru.

Reflecting the isolation and abandonment felt today by the Sanya day laborers who meet in his small 6' x 9' room was tanned, brown suited Nakamori, at 66 a veteran in comparison with the men and women in their 30s and 40s who predominated. The break in communication that Nakamori sees between social classes was reported from a world perspective by Hajime Fujimori, 46, Asia, YMCA secretary.

The Conference Statement describes today's society as having made an absolute out of scientific rationality. Communication at all levels has broken down. There is no longer any consistent sense of values. A false estimation of the importance of the GNP involves man in destructive acts toward the environment that run at cross purposes to God's purpose in creation.

What then is the nature of Salvation Today?

Eikoku Den, a bow-tied 60ish pastor who, after many years as a pastor in Korea now ministers to a Korean congregation in Kyoto, declared that the church's emphasis on the spiritual side of man's life to the neglect of his total existence, has been a mistake. The relationship between the totality of man's existence and history was developed by Kazuyo Kishimoto, secretary of the Kyodan Commission on Mission, who combines a well-informed deep understanding of mission with the height necessary for hanging the handwritten sheets that roll out of discussion sessions.

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SALVATION YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW (continued from page 1)

The Statement says, "Salvation is a process toward a total realization of the potentiality given by God to the whole creation. Within this process, the Statement says, "Salvation means liberation from the material, psychological, political, economic, religious, ideological and social chains that enslave men."

But even as this description that envisions the transformation of specific situations was being formulated, Seiko Takahashi, an earnest woman evangelist in her 30s who is doing independent pioneer work, insisted that the Statement must also recognize the possibility of Salvation that involves a chance in a person's perspective, within the life he is forced to lead.

A Korean lay woman, Yon Su Lee from Osaka rose to question the stress on change within the person in contrast to the situation. Her manner was poised, her face calm, her hands folded circumspectly as she spoke, but her words went right to the point: "That statement provides for passivity." Another Korean, In Ha Lee, agreed and sharpened the question by saying, "This is not the kind of statement that should be made by the people belonging to the majority group."

Alternatives offered tended to reflect the radical position of fighting for structural change from within the situation rather than Takahashi's desired emphasis on the conversion of the perspectives of the person. A compromise was accepted that satisfied no one by its low key but reflected the fact that sharp differences of opinion kept a strong statement from emerging.

When the final session progressed slowly through theological debates, Mrs. Yoshiko Isshiki, one of several alert young lay women present, and the mother of four young sons, urged that they get on to the concrete suggestions before time ran out. Her point was well taken.

What of the church?

Discussions, and criticisms, of the church arose spontaneously in every group. The list of reforms called for touched on worship, the problem of Christianity and Japanese culture (growing out of the lectures given by Dr. Kiyoko Takeda Cho and Dr. Ichiro Hori at the opening session); theological education; Bible study and other lay education and training; the status of the pastor relative to the layman; specialized ministries.

The shot of criticism fired at pastors hit its mark. "When I read the paragraph referring to professional clergymen, I got hopping mad," said Stanley Manierre, NCC director of urban-industrial mission. "It was supposed to make you mad," retorted John Nakajima, NCC general secretary, with the dryness that accompanies his semicrew cut. In the final Statement, a softened version of the criticism appears.

Another blunt criticism referred to theological education. The greyed and grey-suited Masatoshi Doi, 64, of the NCC Center for the Study of Religions, one of the few elder statesmen at the Conference, suggested a tactful introduction, "Recognizing the great effort being made by those entrusted with the task of theological education, we seek to cooperate with them..." but his wording was so obviously conciliatory that it drew only good natured laughter. "After all, if those sharp words of criticism are what this Conference wants to say, then let it say it," said Dr. Akihiko Shinkai, one of four Japan Christian Medical Association participants, all of whom made significant contributions and observations through the Conference.

One of the most direct changes erupted as the plenary reviewed suggestions for concrete joint action. A recommendation, related to a request from the East Asia Christian Conference, called for the NCC to send pastors to serve overseas Japanese groups such as the Hong Kong Japanese Christian Fellowship.

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PARK LEGAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE GETS WCC GRANT

A Japan committee organized to support a Korean resident's suit against a major Japanese industry for discrimination in employment is the recipient of a grant of \$5,000 by the World Council of Churches Central Committee in connection with its Programme to Combat Racism, set up in 1969.

The suit was filed by Chong Suk Park, 19, a university graduate who is a third generation Korean and has used a Japanese as well as a Korean name. Prior to his graduation from Keio University, Park applied for employment at Hitachi Industries but when it was found that he was Korean, the agreement was broken.

A committee to support Park was organized by a group of Japanese and Korean student friends. On its executive committee, in addition to writers and professors, are Rev. Masanobu Yamamoto and Dr. In Ha Lee. Two hundred persons contribute monthly toward a fund to cover the heavy expenses of the suit.

According to NCC General Secretary John Nakajima, Korean residents in Japan are generally refused employment in government offices and in the majority of large companies and industries, but this is the first time the issue has been taken to the courts. "The case will be important in enlightening the Japanese people as to the existence of racial discrimination and injustice in Japan. The decision will have a tremendous impact on the future status of minority peoples in Japan," Nakajima said.

SEIREI-EN BEGINS SERVICES

Seirei-en Nursing Home for the Elderly in Hiroshima will receive its first residents on October 4, following completion of the first 50-bed unit. The Home has been built under the auspices of the Nishi-Chugoku district of The United Church of Christ in Japan, with widespread support from Christians and non-Christians and churches throughout Japan and from individuals and churches overseas.

On Sunday morning, Sept. 26, 400 persons attended a united worship service of thanksgiving and dedication of persons from all Kyodan churches in the West Sub-district. Kyodan Moderator Mitsuho Yoshida preached. Mrs. Masahisa Suzuki, widow of former Kyodan Moderator Suzuki, one of the early supporters of the plan for Seirei-en, and Noboru Niwa were guests. Tasuku Sugihara emphasized the relationship between the Home and the church, and between the Home and the Kyodan Confession of War Responsibility.

Afternoon services were held at Seirei-en to say "thank you" to local residents and officials, with Tamotsu Hasegawa, chairman of the planning committee, in attendance.

INTERNATIONAL TATESHAKAIKAN?

"The tendency to look up to the West and to look down on the East is Japan's greatest problem," a political expert told the Seminar on The Church and Japanese Militarization held in Tokyo Sept. 14-16 under the sponsorship of the Social Committee of The United Church of Christ in Japan, chairman, Yoshio Inoue.

Kenzo Uchida of Kyodo News Service, in his lecture on "Is Japan Heading Toward Militarization?" sees evidence in Nixon's Dollar Defense and Nixon's proposed trip to Mainland China that Japan is at a turning point. Involved in the issue of where Japan will go from here are not only economic, political and military considerations but the basic thought concept of the Japanese since the Meiji period, the problem of looking up to the West and down upon the East is a problem not only of the people, but of the politicians as well, he said.

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INTERNATIONAL TATESHAKAIKAN? (continued from page 3)

The main issues which surfaced in the seminar were the tendency toward militarization and the thinking behind Okinawa's rejection of reversion to the mainland: Rejection of the reversion of Okinawa to the mainland should be understood as based on the Peace Constitution. But the actual roots of the problem are much deeper on the mainland than in Okinawa, said one participant. Thus, unless the people on the mainland grapple seriously with the problems on the mainland, it will be impossible for them to grapple with the problems which Okinawans are facing and thus impossible for any kind of joint cooperation.

There was widespread agreement and commitment to the idea that Christians should develop a theological base for their personal attitudes and decisions with regard to the Self Defense Forces and other political issues.

KO YUKI RETIRES AFTER FIFTY YEARS AT THE SAME CHURCH

September 28 marked the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Mr. Ko Yuki's installation as pastor of the Futaba Independent Church, in 1949 renamed the Higashi Nakano Church of The United Church of Christ. On this day Yuki delivered his last sermon, "The Fifty Years of My Pastorate."

After crediting God's grace and the patience of the congregation with the success of this quite unusual career, Yuki, who is 75 years old, mentioned three points. First was his desire and constant effort for personal growth. The son of an evangelist of the Holiness tradition, Yuki travelled a spiritual journey that took him from liberal theology through Marxism and eschatological faith to Pascal and Barth. His preaching, writings, poems and translations at each stage reflected his new thinking. One thing, however, never changed, he emphasized: his faith in and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Second, Yuki reflected, he never wanted to force his people to grow in the "Yuki way." He respected the individuality of each member of his congregation, and this posture, he believes, brought forth from his congregation a variety of talents.

Third, although he admits that pastors who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel, he, like Paul, made no use of this right. Having his own income through royalties from his writings made it possible for him to lighten the financial burden on his congregation. His policy has been not to persuade people to give, because a financial appeal often becomes a stumbling block for newcomers and deprives the act of contributing to the church of its spontaneity. In spite of--or rather because of--this policy he says, per capita giving has grown considerably over the years.

Yuki concluded his twenty-minute sermon with the answer he had given to young people of the congregation the week before--"I have never regretted becoming a pastor, and I hope many people will follow the path I have taken."

Ko Yuki is a man of quite extraordinary talents. The average Japanese Christian knows by heart at least four or five of his hymns. He is a first-rate poet whose works include 17 hymns and 50 translations appearing in two popular hymnbooks. He has published books on liturgies and introduction to Christianity and directed the editing of two hymnals. In the wider society he is a noted scholar on Pascal, having been the first Japanese to translate Pensees.

Yuki has served the Kyodan in various capacities, has taught in several colleges, and has served the government as a member of a committee on textbooks. But, as one well-wisher remarked at the reception following the service, Ko Yuki was, is and always will be first and foremost a Christian pastor.

The Rev. Soji Kitamura, associate minister for the past four years, succeeds Ko Yuki as pastor of Higashi Nakano Church.

SALVATION YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW (continued from page 2)

The quiet Miss Lee rose again. There was little motion in her voice, but there was no mistaking the feeling and meaning behind her words: "When I read that sentence, I felt deep pain. It carries overtones of imperialism on the part of the church." She offered a substitute that spoke of the need to evaluate the past Japanese church's relationship with other Asian countries, omitting the commitment to sending pastors to serve Japanese congregations in Asia.

Dr. In Ha Lee, also of the Korean Christian Church in Japan, was presiding. "I understand your feeling," he said; "the real problem is that, from fear of overacting, the Japanese church does nothing." A revision that attempted to make the sending of pastors serve the purpose of her statement was approved but, again, on a compromisory level that lacked the dynamic of either conviction or tension.

Perhaps the most significant recommendation, and one that appears also in the introduction to the Statements, is for similar meetings, involving persons from a wide spectrum of experience, theology, church affiliation and lay and ministerial status, to be held on a regional basis throughout Japan.

(A copy of the Statement in English with the comments of the executive committee of the NCC Division of Mission will be made available, upon request, in the near future.)

PEOPLE

THE REV. DR. YOSHIO NORO has resigned from the faculty of the theological department of Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo in connection with the application of some students to transfer from Tokyo Union Theological Seminary to the Aoyama Gakuin theological department. Dr. Noro has been the dean of the college of literature since October 1969.

Noro, one of Japan's leading theologians, is author of Wesley, Existentialist Theology and Existentialist Theology and Ethics, translator of Wesley's Sermons, and a frequent contributor to theological journals. He has been editor of The North East Asia Journal of Theology and is recognized as Japan's top Wesley scholar.

THE REV. DR. JOHN TIMMER, Tokyo, of the Christian Reformed Japan Mission, will become editor of the Japan Christian Quarterly effective with the first issue of 1972. Dr. Timmer succeeds the Rev. Mr. Beverley Tucker of Kyoto. The JCQ is published by the Kyo Bun Kwan and sponsored by the Fellowship of Christian Missionaries.

THE REV. MR. SADAO OZAWA, who has been working in the Neighbors in Need emergency feeding program in Seattle, Washington, returned to Japan in September, but is tentatively planning to return to the United States for another six-month assignment, taking his family with him.

HEADLINE-MAKING EVENTS

. compiled by Ichiji Yokota

A SPECIAL DIET SESSION WILL BE CONVENED OCT. 16 to discuss the Agreement on reversion of Okinawa and amendments to the national budget.

SAYING "THE MOST REALISTIC THING IS FOR JAPAN TO FOLLOW THE international trend with regard to China," Prime Minister Sato agreed to Japan's co-sponsoring with the U.S. the bid for two Chinas in the UN, with mainland China to be given a permanent seat in the Security Council and Taiwan's seat in the General Assembly preserved. Opposition parties objected that Sato is actually ignoring the international trend. One source of support for the Opposition position among the general public is the fear that Japan will become isolated from the rest of the world.

THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS LEFT SAFELY FOR EUROPE SEPT. 27. Four white-helmeted students had been arrested for intruding into the Imperial Palace shouting "Cancel the visit..."

A NICHIREN FANATIC, ANGRY TOWARD SOKA GAKKAI, ATTEMPTED to assassinate Komei Party Head Takeiri in front of Party headquarters.

500 STUDENTS AMBUSHED A CORPS OF POLICEMEN, KILLING three men in the course of the second round of forced expulsion of persons attempting to block construction of the New Tokyo International Airport. Removal of a farmer's house located near the main runway site is expected to spark another violent clash, but officials maintain the new airport will open in May next year.

ACCORDING TO THE ASAHI SHIMBUN'S NATIONWIDE SURVEY, REPORTED Aug. 27, among persons asked whether they thought Nixon's Dollar Policy will influence the livelihood of Japanese, 76% replied positively (94% among those in the managerial class).

The main reasons given 1) the heavy blow to the export business and 2) the inflation that will follow.

On whether Nixon's Dollar Policy will harm U.S.-Japan relations, opinion was split between those who thought it would, and those who thought it would not.

PLAINTIFFS AND SUPPORTERS SHOUTED "BANZAI" AFTER the Niigata District Court ordered Showa Denko Company to pay damages of ¥270 million to mercury poisoning victims. But there are some lingering doubts as to whether Industry has gotten the message and whether the government will enforce adequate pollution control among the giant businesses close to them. Nevertheless, it is felt that the impact of the legal victory of "the people" will be considerable.